
Virginia Social Services System Strategic Plan Steering Committee Charter

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1. Introduction

The Virginia Social Services System (VSSS) is an organization consisting of three major groups of partners: local departments of social services (LDSS), community action agencies (CAA) and the Virginia Department of Social Services. Each of these entities/partners has a role to play in the administration and delivery of benefits and social services to the citizens of Virginia.

The Virginia Social Services System has implemented strategic planning to assist in driving the organization towards a common vision and set of goals. One objective is to institutionalize planning as a process that is used not only to guide all entities/partners within VSSS, but as a tool that can be used in making key decisions and assist in tracking progress towards achieving its goals and reaching its vision. The plan covers a five year timeframe and is to be updated on an annual basis.¹

One key component of this process is the Strategic Plan Steering Committee. This committee is the driving force behind the process. It oversees, tracks, monitors and champions the strategic planning process across VSSS. It consists of key individuals and representatives from the VSSS.

This document (“Strategic Planning Steering Committee Charter”) details the roles and responsibilities of the steering committee. It also details its membership, governance and rules.

2. Purpose

The main purpose of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee is to change the outcomes for the residents of the Commonwealth by executing a number of specific objectives as detailed below:

- Institutionalize, promote and champion the strategic planning process
- Move the Virginia Social Services System to a performance and outcomes based organization
- Promote collaboration among all entities/partners with the Virginia Social Services System
- Guide the Virginia Social Services System based upon actual data
- Build a cohesive Virginia Social Services System through the use of the strategic planning process; and
- Ensure continuous organizational education and learning in related subjects.

¹ In February 2007, the Steering Committee adopted a five-year timeframe for the system’s strategic plan. The initial five-year plan extends from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2008 through 2013. The committee also instituted a requirement for annual updates of the strategic plan, effective July 1, 2007, the beginning of SFY 2008.

3. Scope

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee oversees all aspects of the strategic planning process for the Virginia Social Services System.

The Strategic Plan Steering process is not intended to place any restrictions or guidelines on strategic planning activities conducted by any partner. The VSSS strategic plan and associated processes may influence strategic plans and processes owned by partners.

4. Membership

The structure of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee included a cross-section of representatives from the Virginia Social Services System. The Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services serves as the Chair for the steering committee. The VDSS Chief Operating Officer, Executive Director of the Virginia Community Action Partnership (VACAP) and a director of a local department of social services serve as Vice Chairs of the steering committee. Terms for Vice Chairs will be concurrent with their positions as chief operating officer, executive director or local director, respectively. The President of the Virginia League of Social Services Executives (or designee) shall make steering committee membership recommendations to the Chair and Vice Chairs. Local department of social services representatives shall be appointed by the Chair for an initial two-year term, with subsequent reappointments at the discretion of the League President in collaboration with the Chair.

In addition to the membership, the steering committee is supported by the VDSS Division of Strategy Management and Research (SMR). SMR supplies staff and administrative support and completes assigned action items where appropriate.

The Steering Committee is the owner of the VSSS strategic plan. Goal Committees are responsible for specific components of the plan, carrying out actions items to support the Goal, and monitoring and reporting on Goal progress.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

In addition to supporting and promoting the concept of the Virginia Social Services System and strategic planning as a process, the Strategic Plan Steering Committee is also responsible for the following:

- Champion the process at every opportunity to all entities/partners within VSSS
- Ensure a proactive marketing process exists to promote and demonstrate the benefits of the process.
- Ensure data is made available in a timely manner to support the measurement of key performance indicators as detailed within VSSS plans
- Ensure that key elements of the VSSS Strategic Plan (i.e. goals and strategies) are assigned to specific individuals
- Continuously review plan progress

- Establish a complete plan once every five years and update it on an annual basis, and
- Ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and processes are implemented where necessary to make strategic planning a process and not a product.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Committee membership includes: a Chair, Co-Vice Chairs, Goal Champions, Partners and Stakeholder Representatives.

Listed below are responsibilities specific to each position on the Strategic Plan Steering Committee.

Steering Committee Chair:

- Serve as the head of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- Chief promoter of the VSSS Strategic Plan
- Empower others in the structure to have access to information and resources to successfully execute the plan.

Steering Committee Vice-Chairs:

- Coordinate and manage information provided by the Goal Champions.
- Support the Chair in the execution of their duties.
- Brief the Steering Committee Chair as required.

Goal Co-Champions:

- Assume responsibility for monitoring and tracking of progress on an assigned goal using the plan's published measures
- Lead efforts to update the portions of the plan related to the assigned goal annually
- Provide progress reports at the Strategic Plan Steering Committee meetings
- Schedule and attend regular Goal Committee meetings

Member Representatives:

- Serve as the voice for the partners/stakeholders within the system
- Participate in decision-making and develop action items within the Goal Committee
- Participate in the monitoring and tracking of progress for the plan
- Participate in the annual update of the plan
- Provide input and advice to the committee from their relevant perspective

Goal Committees

Goal Committees have responsibility for developing objectives and measures specific to the assigned goal. The Goal Committee membership includes Goal Co-Champions and other individuals, including key stakeholders outside of the VSSS, whose expertise is necessary to assist the committee in performing its role. There are two Co-Champions for each Goal Committee. Goal Co-Champions will be representatives from VDSS, local departments of social services or Community Action Agencies.

Goal Committee member responsibilities are to:

- Attend periodic meetings
- Participate in the maintenance of the plan by identifying proposed changes and making recommendations
- Develop a work plan for the committee to guide development of objectives, strategies and measures for the assigned goal
- Gather measurement data
- Establish measurement baselines
- Identify measurement owners as required
- Serve as a promoter and communicator of the plan

Listed below are responsibilities specific to Goal Co-Champions of each Goal Committee. Goal Co-Champions are to:

- Serve as liaisons between the Strategic Plan Steering Committee and their assigned Goal Committee
- Ensure Goal Committees have representative membership to accomplish for their assigned responsibilities
- Chair Goal Committee meetings
- Provide a summary of committee meetings and updates on committee work to the VDSS SMR for maintenance of the website.

Plan Support

The Division of Strategy Management and Research supports the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Goal Champions and Goal Committees. This function is led by the strategic planner position within the division.

Areas of responsibility include:

6. Support of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee in all aspects of its role.
7. Support of all entities within the system in respect to strategic planning and performance measurement activities that relate to the VSSS Strategic Plan.
8. Collaboration with the Steering Committee and the Division of Public Affairs to market the plan.
9. Development and implementation of standards and templates for all levels of VSSS strategic planning and performance measurement.
10. Establishment of a web site for planning and performance measurement that includes the tools, templates, reference documents and established performance indicators displaying current status.
11. Continuous organizational education and learning in the subject of planning and performance management.
12. Establishment of a library where all planning and measurement related documents would reside.
13. Monitoring of external requirements that impact the System, such as that of the Council on Virginia's Future and the Department of Planning and Budget.

6. Governance

Following is the governance for the Strategic Plan Steering Committee:

- Steering Committee membership shall not exceed twenty-five (25) people.
- Decisions are to be made by consensus of the committee members present.
- The steering committee determines the frequency of its meetings.